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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 000821

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/EX AND WHA/CAR  
S/CRS  
INL FOR KEVIN BROWN AND ANGELIC YOUNG  
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD  
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR  
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WHA/EX PLEASE PASS USOAS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/06/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [HA](#)

SUBJECT: ANTI-KIDNAPPING MARCH PEACEFUL, BUT PRESSURE  
MOUNTS ON POLICE AND JUSTICE SECTORS

REF: A. 07 PORT AU PRINCE 365

[1](#)B. PORT AU PRINCE 793

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Classified By: Ambassador Janet A. Sanderson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Private sector and civil society groups carried out a peaceful demonstration June 4 to draw attention to the gravity of security problems, in particular the recent spate of kidnappings in the capital. The rate of kidnappings has continued to rise since early 2008, and pressure is mounting on the Haitian police and justice systems to take action. Many of the demands are directed toward police director Mario Andresol and also Haiti's weak judicial system. The participation of many sectors in the protest shows a real popular will toward addressing the country's security and justice problems. Typical political maneuvering, however, threatens to distract the police and the government from the pure security issue. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) The Haitian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIH) spearheaded the organization of a June 4 march against kidnapping in downtown Port-au-Prince. MINUSTAH estimates range from 2000 to 3000 demonstrators, with civil society groups, parliamentarians and political parties joining the action. MINUSTAH and the Haitian National Police (HNP) increased their presence for the event, and reported no violence and a small number of arrests for minor infractions. Over the course of three hours, demonstrators marched past the Presidential Palace while chanting that President Preval should do more about kidnapping and calling for tougher punishment for perpetrators and justice for the victims. The crowd also approached the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) to deliver a letter detailing citizens' concerns about increased kidnapping and insecurity. CCIH President Jean-Robert Argant told us afterward he was "disappointed" by the lack of high-level GOH and private sector participation. He said CCIH now plans to increase pressure on the Ministry of Justice to work harder to fight insecurity.

[1](#)3. (C) Incidents of kidnappings around Port-au-Prince continue at elevated levels. According to MINUSTAH, kidnappings numbered 36 for the month of May, compared to

just 13 in May 2007. UNPOL and HNP report 160 people have been kidnapped so far in 2008, putting the country on track for a significant increase from the 237 abductions in all of 2007. In addition to the increased number of kidnappings, several recent incidents -- the kidnapping and murder of a high school student and kidnappings of a Canadian citizen and the daughter of the Ministry of Commerce's chief of staff -- have heightened fear and anger among upper class Haitians and the international community. DAO notes that recent kidnappings seem to have an organizational element not seen since the crackdown on Cite Soleil-based kidnapping rings in early 2007 (ref A).

14. (C) President Preval's Chief of Staff Fritz Longchamp told the Ambassador June 4 he is concerned there may be maneuvering afoot to oust HNP Director General Mario Andresol. He had heard rumors, which some were beginning to accept as truth, that increased insecurity was politically inspired by Preval's opponents in retaliation against the Preval team, to include Andresol. (Note: The alternate conspiracy theory is that Preval's side is deliberately inciting crime to prove that Robert Manuel, the 'law and order' prime minister candidate (ref B), is exactly what the country needs right now. Proponents of this theory point to the sudden appearance of pervasive 'Bob Manuel equals security' graffiti around the capital as evidence that insecurity strengthens Manuel's candidacy. End note.)

15. (U) DG Andresol on June 5 publicly blamed the broken justice system and corrupt judges for Haiti's security problems. He complained that suspects are back on the street not long after their arrest, having paid off a judge or used a personal connection to escape prosecution. The Chamber of Deputies summoned Andresol and several other high-ranking HNP

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officers to appear on June 5 to answer questions before Parliament. Andresol did not/not appear, sparking angry public statements from several Deputies.

16. (C) Andresol's close advisors told NAS that the DG's role within the justice system writ large has grown more and more isolated in recent months, with Secretary of State for Public Security Eucher Luc Joseph and Presidential security advisor (now PM-designate) Robert Manuel becoming involved in internal HNP staffing and logistical decisions. However, Manuel and Longchamp have expressed to the Ambassador in recent months continuing support for Andresol at the level of the Presidency.

17. (C) Comment: The anti-kidnapping march, and in particular its peaceful nature, was a positive signal that Haitian civil society is strengthening. Increasing pressure on Haiti's security and justice apparatus is justified, as both institutions are grossly ill-equipped to handle Haiti's security problems. Although much of the kidnapping is likely the result of pure criminals capitalizing on a dearth of police forces and a weak national government, rumors of a political aspect are both plausible and worrisome.  
SANDERSON